

which he had discovered after Henry left his employment.

That was the universal agreement. Old man Milton had had the misfortune to have his only son turn out bad. The stubborn old man mourned for the young fellow secretly, but he set his face as hard as a flint in public.

Then came the day when an attack of paralysis seized him, and he awakened from his coma to see Lucy at his bedside, nursing him. When he recovered he asked her to keep house for him. He meant to adopt her, he said, as he had no children.

The months passed. Lucy sometimes dared to speak of Henry, but the old man would not betray his emotion.

"He was a bad lot, my dear," he said. "I know there was something between you, but you've had a mighty narrow escape. I want you to find some young fellow that will be worthy of you."

Then Lucy would sigh and say nothing. It was three years now since she had heard from Henry.

Then one day the insurance agent came in, breathless with excitement. All the city was talking of a new opera, he said, composed by one Henry Milton. He was America's great musical prodigy. The newspapers were full of him.

Middleboro reluctantly agreed that it might have been mistaken. But not so the old man. He was more stubborn than ever.

"I don't care if he can fool the public," he said. "Any knave can do that. When Henry takes up a clean line of work and makes good at it I'll take him back. Till then—no, sir!"

Yet Lucy knew that he secretly devoured the newspapers, searching for his son's name. He was secretly proud of him. Lucy had an idea.

"Father," she said coaxingly—she called him that nowadays—"he is to conduct at a performance in Boston next Friday. Now you know you have

been promising to take me to Boston. Let us go and hear him."

"What do I want to hear him for?" growled the farmer. "Hain't I heard him times and again strumming on that old piano? I've had enough of hearing him, my lass."

However, by dint of coaxing, Lucy inveigled him to Boston, and thence to the opera house, where, upon a dozen billboards, as large as life, were the words Henry Milton, beneath a flesh and blood reproduction of the young man.

Lucy felt herself trembling. She knew that he had long ago forgotten her; she had nerved herself to accompany the old man only out of a sense of duty, in the hope of effecting a reconciliation; if she saw Henry she meant to show him her indifference.

But when the farmer saw his son conducting in the orchestra, a strange look came over his face. And Lucy, watching him, knew that the past was forgotten in the joy at finding his boy.

The old man's stupefaction increased as, seated all through the bewildering medley of sounds, he saw Henry waving his baton and his hand, sometimes in alternation and sometimes together.

"Well, I'm swung!" he exclaimed. He turned to his neighbor.

"How much do you reckon that there young fellow Milton makes a night out of this?"

"O, perhaps three hundred dollars," answered the other.

The farmer gaped at him and subsided into his seat.

They were at Henry's side almost before the piece was ended. And Henry, looking up, suddenly perceived his father and Lucy. His face grew pale.

"Hen! Hen!" faltered the old man, and suddenly he grabbed to his heart and muttered something about forgiveness and coming home.

"Well, father, I wanted to scores of times, but you know you told me